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CONFEDERATION A FAILURE AS A CONSTITUTIONAL REMEDY

Across the Atlantic fifty years is a brief period in the life of a nation, in the New World it is long enough to see the birth of great provinces and the development of populous cities. Between 1867 and 1917 Canada has materially made great progress, politically its position is worse, for it still drags the clerical chain to snap which was the motive of the constitutional change 50 years ago. The English tourist who views our cities from an auto and speeds from ocean to ocean in a Pullman, is astonished by what he sees and gushes over the prosperity of the Dominion. If the visitor is in English public life, with the perplexing problem of Ireland in mind, he jumps to the conclusion that the flourishing condition which astonishes him, is the result of Canada's having adopted the federal system of government, and on returning home he will declare, with the assured confidence of one who has been an eyewitness, that the Imperial parliament must take a leaf from Canada's experience. This illustrates the danger of generalizing from imperfect data. Had the visitor compared the rural sections of Quebec with those of Ontario, had he even traversed a concession of farmers who are Catholic and turned into another of Protestant farmers, he would have seen that a change in constitution had not helped the one or affected the other. That Canada's progress is due to the industry, thrift, and enterprise of the majority of its inhabitants, and to the unfolding of great natural resources, the visitor no more perceives than do those unreflecting speakers and writers who ascribe the advances of the past fifty years to the B.N.A. act.

It is a common impression, that Canada's onward march since 1867 is due to the adoption of a written constitution, rather than to the labor of an industrious and energetic population. Mankind love the marvellous when they take to boasting of themselves and their country. The fact is

illustrated all over the world, that written constitutions have a secondary place either in the peace or progress of nations. Mexico has an admirably written constitution yet it is a most undesirable country to live in, bearing out the truth that the excellence of a government depends on the character of the people and not on the parchment scroll in its archives. The country that has a moral, intelligent population will prosper under any form of constitution; a country whose people are ignorant and debased will wither under the best constitution that the wit of man ever devised.

To get apparent support for this contention of the marvellous effect of Confederation, it is common to represent that Canada up to 1867 was in a backward, decaying condition, and that the B.N.A. act came as a tonic and stimulant, which changed the face of everything. This is contrary to fact. The change in 1867 was not from a bad to a good form of government. Canada had fifty years ago an excellent form of government, more helpful to industry than that which now prevails, in so far that taxes were lower and the machinery of government more simple and direct. The pre-Confederation period was for Ontario a prosperous and happy one. Immigrants, of a quality we have not known since, poured in every summer, the forest was being rapidly subdued, trade was advancing by leaps and bounds, the laboring class content, for living was cheap under a low customs tariff. If, then, people, half a century ago, were doing so well, why, in a period of hope and plenty, did they consent to the adoption of a new constitution? The answer is, that the relations between Protestant Ontario and Catholic Quebec had reached the breaking point, that a continuance of the partnership was impossible—the two provinces had either to separate or a new adjustment of their relations made. That is the one and true cause for the B.N.A. act being framed and adopted. There was no depression, no deadness in trade, no material reasons for a change in system of government, neither was there a demand for a change on the score of the existing form of government being of an inferior type and needing to be replaced by a better. There were no such pretences. The exciting cause of the agitation was, that the domination of Ontario by clerical Quebec had become so exasperating that a re-adjustment of the relations between the two provinces

could no longer be avoided. Confederation was adopted to overcome that difficulty. That was its special, its only purpose. Has it done so? If it has not, then Confederation, in the special object for which it was designed, has been a failure. Proof is not far to seek; it is found in the situation of today. Compare the state of affairs of 1867 with what exists in 1917 and it will be seen that the attitude of Quebec is more menacing than ever; that the future peace of our country is more seriously threatened than it was in 1867. Whoever surveys the existing situation with an open mind, cannot escape the conclusion that Confederation as a remedy for the difficulty it was designed to overcome has been a failure. No splendid achievements in the realm of material progress can obscure that fact. Nay, it has been worse than a failure, for it has aggravated the grievances it was devised to remedy, so that they are more intolerable than they were fifty years ago. The Quebec of today, in its aspiration for complete autonomy, its insistence in thrusting its sectarianism into every branch of the public service, its opposition to public schools, its demand that the French language be placed on an equality with English, its adoption of methods which drive Protestant farmers from the lands in Quebec their forefathers cleared, their refusal to bear an equal share in military service, proves how, in the years that have passed since 1867, Confederation instead of abating has developed and solidified the menace its authors asserted it would remove. The answer of those who point to the advances made by the Dominion in the half-century is no answer to all. To show so many million acres are under wheat, so many thousands of miles of railway constructed, so many towns and cities brought into existence where the buffalo roamed, does not touch the question. Has Confederation improved the relations between Ontario and Quebec? That it has not is palpable and therefore the sad admission follows, that, in the set purpose for which Confederation was invoked, it has been an utter failure.

The tendency of humanity to create gods of its own making is rampant among us, and to men of moderate merit are ascribed far-sightedness and disinterested patriotism. Something of the halo which our neighbors have thrown around the founders of their republic is being attempted with the so-called Fathers of Confederation. In the inter-

est of Truth it is proper to investigate and ascertain what the facts justify. As one who watched with deep interest the events that led to Confederation, and having had opportunity to judge of its leaders at close range, I would give my impressions of them and their work. That the union of 1841 was doomed was apparent for many years but it would have continued longer than it did had it not been for George Brown. The agitation he organized for reform in the mode of representation brought about the deadlock which resulted in Confederation. A study of his life will give a better idea to the reader of the situation that existed previous to 1867 and of the agencies that shaped the B.N.A. act than any other form of narrative.

When Brown left Scotland for America he was a strippling of twenty. He landed in New York in 1838, and found the atmosphere that then prevailed uncongenial. Hatred of Britain colored public opinion and the sentiment in favor of negro slavery was strong. If the youth had any inclinations towards republicanism they melted away, and he became ardent in his love of British institutions and in his hatred of slavery. During the few years he was in New York he became associated with newspaper life, so that, when he determined on getting once more under the union jack, it was with a view to start a newspaper in Toronto. He found warmer encouragement than he looked for. In 1843, though Toronto was a small town, its citizens were so divided that any journalist who took the side of either party could count upon its support. The party that was in power claimed to be the only truly loyal party, and that upon them depended the saving of Canada from annexation. When loyalty means love of country and devotion to its highest interests it is a noble passion, but loyalty assumed as a party cry, to support a claim to rule and to monopolise public offices, is a despicable subterfuge. Brown quickly took in the situation and saw that the loyalty cry was being used by a selfish coterie to the hurt of the common people. He was young, abounding in vitality, and of a most enthusiastic temperament. Whatever he undertook he did with all his might. A more restless, energetic young man there was not to be found in the rising town that was being built along the bay. In the slang of our day, he was a live wire, and was welcomed by those who were engaged in an uphill fight to overturn a combination who grabbed at whatever

would put money in their pockets. With Brown there was no middle course, he was one-sided to the verge of arrogance. Whoever was against him was wrong, and wrong without the slightest justification, and, therefore, in the newspaper he started he denounced opponents with all the strength of language at his command. Positive in his convictions and unwavering in whatever course he chose, he soon had a following, which included many of the more solid-thinking and prosperous people of the colony. At first he was the exponent of views they had privately formed, gradually he dictated what views they ought to hold. The times favored such a man and such a newspaper. Apart from the subject of whether Canada should have responsible government or continue to be ruled from Downing-st., there were questions of Church and State of a far-reaching kind. In controversies that kept up a more than comfortable heat, Brown was active and the Globe led the march for reform. Bishop Strachan, whom the Globe dubbed Jock Toronto, saw in its editor an atheist seeking the overthrow of pure religion, and said so for no other reason than that Brown was demanding the Anglican body be placed on an equality with other denominations, while rival editors were pleased to refer to him as a rebel, kindly intimating the officers of the crown should deal with him.

It was inevitable such a man should be sent to parliament, and on his second trial for a seat he was elected. He was in the prime of life, 33 years old, and a splendid specimen of manhood. He stood 6 feet 2 inches, straight as a pine-tree, broad-shouldered, and angular in frame. With mobile features, animated in expression, he gave the impression of power which was confirmed by a sonorous voice. Years before his election he had won a reputation as a speaker, not because of his speech being eloquent but because it was forcible and his language strong. On the platform he had a few serious drawbacks, the most noticeable that hesitation in utterance to which the Scotch have given the name habber, which, until he got excited, hindered the free flow of words, while his gestures were ungainly. Even in his most carefully prepared speeches there was no play of fancy, no flights of imagination, they were compact with facts and arguments and he was a veritable Gradgrind for bluebooks and statistics. He was often vehement but never impassioned, but the commonsense of the views he advanc-

ed, his earnestness and the force with which he expressed himself, seldom failed to command an audience. He was at his best in denouncing an opponent or exposing the hollowness of his assertions, for Brown was ready in argument. He lacked in imagination and, still more so, in the faculty that seeks to discover the philosophy of problems. He skimmed the surface of the subjects he dealt with and his one solution for obtaining reforms was, Agitate, agitate, agitate! His attempts at raillery and sarcasm fell flat, for he lacked humor. He was morbidly sensitive about the reporting of his speeches. On all occasions, no matter how trivial or how briefly he spoke, the report that was to appear in the *Globe* had to be submitted to him for revision. J. K. Edwards, than whom there was not a more capable reporter, accompanied him to his meetings, and over his MS. Brown would spend hours, often rewriting long sections. To get time for this, his speech was held over a day or two after the general report of the meeting. The length of his speeches told against their effect, for they wearied most listeners and appalled the average reader when he saw how many columns the report filled. It is not in human nature to concentrate attention for any length of time, and Brown exceeded the limit. He rarely spoke less than an hour, often two hours and more. His speech in the Confederation Debates would make a small volume.

His tours over the length and breadth of the province brought him into close contact with the people and he won hosts of friends. His hearty manner and simple tastes made him a welcome guest, the more so that the more he learnt of farming the more enthusiastic he became in the calling of those with whom he stayed overnight. His love of everything pertaining to agriculture was genuine and when his means justified the venture, he bought land and was known to his associates by the title McGregor of Streetsville bestowed upon him, the Laird of Bothwell.

His tours did more than enhance his personal reputation, they aided to establish the *Globe*, which quickly attained a standing far ahead of its rivals. Apart from its being the organ of a virile politician, it got the lead by its inherent merits as a gatherer of news, which it supplied with a fulness and accuracy neither the *Colonist* nor *Leader* approached, so that thousands who cared not for its editorials were subscribers. Believing that whatever is worth

doing is worth doing well, Brown organized a system of getting out a newspaper that was a novelty at that time. He exacted the best possible from his employees. Each number had to be carefully compiled so as to omit nothing of importance, the proofs accurately read, the paper to be well-printed, and issued punctually. He was ahead of his times, and often of his finances, in buying the latest printing plant. In dealing with his hands he was just and considerate. When the union tried to dictate how he should conduct his business he broke with it, but paid higher wages and made daily duty lighter than any union office. He was exacting in the observance of the day of rest, and the office was deserted from Saturday midnight to Monday morning. The same conscientiousness he applied to advertising, no notices of horseraces, prizefights, or theatricals were accepted. At a time when its facilities were limited and expensive, he was daring in the use of the telegraph. After the first dozen years of the Globe's existence he did little editorial work, leaving it to his brother Gordon, the best newspaper man Canada has yet known. He in no way resembled George, being quiet and retiring, but he had an instinctive sense of what the public want in a daily paper, and he saw that they got it. As a writer he was facile and pungent, but not broad in his views, and apt to allow his personal likes and dislikes give color to them. His animosity towards Goldwin Smith and Sir Charles Tupper are instances in point. Looking back on the period during which the Globe attained its standing I would say it was Gordon, the indefatigable worker, who did most. Whoever looks over old files of the Globe can pick out the articles George wrote by their big-letter headings and wealth of capitals and italics. The captiousness which led both brothers to criticise whatever the other party advanced, no matter what its merits, was unfortunate for their reputation for candor and fairness. The Globe's treatment of Sir Edmund Head illustrates alike the pettiness and lack of humor of Brown. The Governor's book on Shall and Will pointed many a gibe and his unfortunate expression in a speech of describing Indians as Aboriginal natives had tiresome iteration. For the first twenty years or more of its career the Globe yielded little after paying expenses, and interest on capital. This was due to the steady drain on its income arising from subscribers who did not pay what they were

owing. George's anxiety for circulation and the political influence it meant, deterred him from adopting the cash system, with the result that he missed a large fortune through dishonest subscribers.

By the time the *Globe* had become a provincial institution, Toronto was an attractive little city of over thirty thousand inhabitants; large enough to have somewhat of city features yet not so large that the bulk of its residents were strangers to one another, or that their interests and tastes moved in widely separate grooves. The youth had one theatre and what the Nickersons were doing gave spice to their talk. The lyceum flourished, and in the winter noted Americans held forth in St. Lawrence hall and lectures by such local men as Daniel Wilson, Beaven, McCaul, and Croft drew audiences. Visits by Wilson and Kennedy delighted the Scotch, and Gough drew crowds to the Adelaide-st. Methodist church. A circus on the Esplanade, with a Shakespearean clown, excited the whole city. A balloon ascension from the field adjoining the Queen's hotel was an interlude one summer day, and the sojourn of a grizzly bear was a winter feature. Those were the days when there was not a butcher-shop in the city and housewives made a morning visit to the St. Lawrence market; when the building of a crystal palace was a boast next to the rising of the walls of the Rossin house, which was confidently asserted to equal New York's famous hostelry the St. Nicholas; when torchlight processions with spouting roman candles was the favorite method of celebrating a party victory; when those expecting letters from the east watched for the smoke of the Montreal steamer, while the Rochester steamer furnished communication with New York, and in winter, when unable to reach the Queen's wharf, landed passengers and freight on the ice; when every house in the old Fort was tenanted and a guard was maintained at the Governor-general's gates; when distinguished visitors, accorded a civic reception, were driven in open carriages up college avenue and back by Church-street or treated to a sail down the bay. It was the day of small things and there was a laudable local pride in displaying the best they had. It was the day when fugitive slaves dropped in by the underground route and on the arms of those who sawed and split wood alongside the curb on King and Yonge streets were to be seen the marks branded by their

masters, sometimes, below their tattered shirts, the scars of lashings; when darkies, the only whitewashers, lived in communities by themselves, and from whence issued forth ice-cream carts in summer and in winter came men in white aprons with a tinkling bell, shouting Hot muffins! Recalling the rhyme the children of sixty-years ago repeated—

We all know the muffin man, we all know him well;

We all know the muffin man by the ringing of his bell.

It was the boast of the citizens that there was not a beggar, by habit and repute, within the city bounds and that it had only one slum, Stanley-street, where goats and pigs shared the sidewalks and cowbells were heard morning and evening. On the sunnyside of the streets, in front of stores, wooden-awnings spanned the sidewalks, and on a rainy day you could walk from Queen to King street without a drop reaching you. The future metropolis was in the making and each sign of progress was exulted in and nothing was too small to interest its residents. When a notorious quack carried the town by storm it was told all over it, how George Brown came down from his office to shake hands with Dr. Tumblety as he sat in his carriage, and when the master of the ferry to the island was bought over by a Conservative heeler, all laughed at the Globe changing from the respectful Captain Moody to the derisive appellation of Capting Moody.

Partly because the residents had so little of real importance to distract their attention, they took politics more seriously than in these days of supercilious cynicism. They knew by sight, if not personally, all the leaders, knew their families and all about them, and this acquaintance, even though secondhand, gave them a deeper interest in what they said and did; it was no academic interest but a live interest in every move of the political chessboard. The intense feeling aroused by the double-shuffle or the drafting of the Reform platform has no counterpart since 1859, and it centered in George Brown. After his first session in parliament he was recognized as the exponent of Ontario's rights, thousands, especially among the farmers, swearing by his views, ready to follow wherever he led. Analyzing how he came by his ascendancy it will be found it was due to his being a man of one masterful conviction. He left Scotland while it was being convulsed by the agitation to

vindicate religious independence, and on coming to Canada he found the same issue under another form. He found a set of old families working hand-in-hand with Anglican clergymen to establish in Ontario conditions like those which existed in England at that period—a State church and a landholding aristocracy. To defeat them in their purpose Brown threw himself into the combat with all the energy of a resolute man who hated, from the bottom of his soul, any class who sought to rule their fellowbeings, either in the temporal or spiritual domain, by a pretended prescriptive right. That every soul born into the world is given the privilege of choosing between good and evil, and for how that privilege is used each soul is accountable to God alone, is a self-evident truth. The privilege of choice may be left unused or it may be perverted. A man may choose to transfer the allegiance due his Maker to his fellowman, who will dictate what he shall do. His choice may be deplored but it ought to be respected, what rouses indignation is when the civil magistrate steps in to help the ecclesiastic. That one-seventh of the land in Ontario should have been assigned for the support of a specially selected church and that its ministers should be declared by the courts to have the same rights and authority as are vested in every rector in England, was intolerable to men who resented the remotest semblance of union between Church and State, yet so determined were those who profited by those privileges, so resolutely did they resist, that Ontario was only saved from the incubus of a State church by an agitation that lasted nigh forty years. In the forefront of that agitation stood George Brown. He was assailed by those opposed to him with a bitterness that verged on indecency. Among his friends were those who wished he was less outspoken, for he was antagonizing individuals who otherwise would help him, and injuring his business career. The taunt was thrown at him, that it was all very well for him to ride the Protestant horse in Ontario, where there were plenty to cheer him, it would be different when he went to Quebec, where not a man of any prominence would dare to openly back him. He was elected to the legislature, which was then sitting in the city of Quebec where the very atmosphere was permeated by the spirit of the Papacy, where the Protestant minority crouched before the priests, fawned upon them, content to make any concession, submit to any indignity, if allowed to go on with-

out interruption in their business of accumulating money. He stood on the floor of the house, surrounded by French-speaking members who hated him and by English-speaking Conservatives who, believing he was thereby digging his political grave, exulted over every word he uttered that gave Catholics offence. Change of surroundings did not, however, cause Brown to waver, and he continued to demand with unabated force of speech, that Ontario be given her constitutional right in the control of the taxes she paid by increasing the number of her representatives. He is a churl who would deny the admiration due this stalwart member, who, facing a gallery packed with priests and their followers, opposed bills to incorporate nuns and monks and grants of public money to support their institutions. The bitterest drop in his cup was, when smooth-tongued members of Ontario rose and asked the house not to judge the people of the western province by the sentiments just expressed by the member for Kent, and evoked a cheer by airing their claim to a wide tolerance and their hatred of bigotry and narrowness.

For the first time Brown encountered in debate he who was to be his life-long opponent, Sir John Macdonald. They differed so widely in mental attitude that antagonism was inevitable; the pity was, that difference of opinion should have been colored by personal dislike. Brown's conduct in the investigation of a public institution was made the excuse of Macdonald's preferring a charge against him of malice and deliberate perversion of testimony. For that assault on his honor Brown said he would not forgive Macdonald until he retracted and apologized, which he never did. In manner the contrast between the two was palpable. Brown was downright in act and in speech almost blunt. Macdonald was a master of finesse and captivating in conversation. He improved the unpopularity of Brown among the French to attach them more firmly to himself. Watching him in the house it was impossible not to admire the tact with which Macdonald evaded assaults and conciliated opponents. He rarely replied to arguments and when he did, never argued from first principles. His reply to a charge was usually, "You're another," and aided by a preternatural memory he seldom failed to drag from the forgotten past some inconsistency in act or speech, or raise the laugh against his critic by some paltry story, some

quip or jest. He was emphatically a politician and in the art of getting over difficulties and winning supporters can never be surpassed. His adroitness, his facility in simulating feelings he did not entertain, approached positive genius and enabled him to gain a great reputation and increase it to the end, without possessing, what is regarded by many as essential, rhetorical ability. He was no speaker in the popular sense of the term, his manner was either a drawl or a succession of jerky sentences, but he was never tedious, and behind all he said could be discerned his native talent. His keen perception of men and events, his innate sense of what should be done, made him a leader in any public assembly. To this, he united a quick, almost nervous movement in coming to a decision, which was the base of his eminent administrative ability. The contrast between him and Brown recalled that between a politician of the court of Charles II., supple and careless of what might happen in the future if the present occasion was smoothed over, and a Puritan stern and earnest in his principles.

Persistent agitation resulted in carrying the bill abolishing the rectories. Quickly following it, came the act which settled the clergy reserves. Several were prominent in securing these two epochal reforms, but Brown was foremost. There remained a third abuse to be grappled with and again he led. The claim of the priests for separate schools, provided for by rates levied by authority of parliament and reinforced by grants out of the public chest, was a more glaring violation of equality in civil rights than either the rectories or the clergy reserves, yet much more difficult to uproot. The Quebec members were not concerned about stripping Protestant clergy of land and income and allowed the Ontario majority to have their way, but taking away privileges claimed by their priests was an entirely different story. It was by their votes separate schools had been forced on Ontario and they were dead-set in their resolution to continue them. The argument, that the measure affected Ontario alone and that its members, therefore, should be left to deal with it, was scoffed at by the representatives who came from east of the Ottawa. They had the same legal power to vote on that as on any other motion, and they used their votes as directed by their priests. Repeated divisions convinced Brown that so long as the legislature was composed of an equal number of

members from each province, nothing could be effected. This led him to advocate that the number of representatives be in proportion to population—Rep. by Pop. as it came to be termed, for short. Ontario had the larger population, and if given the additional members its numbers called for, separate schools would be voted down. The Catholic members saw this, and would have nothing to do with the proposed device. Aided by their Conservative allies, Brown's motion, in whatever shape it was submitted, even when a single additional member was all that was asked, was lost. He might with stronger reason, and possibly with less opposition, have proposed that representation be based in proportion to the respective contributions to the revenue of the two provinces, for it was as notorious then as it is to-day, that the English-speaking people were much the larger contributors of taxes. The axiom, that they who pay most should have the larger voice in spending Brown pressed strongly, only to be laughed at by Cartier and his phalanx, who voted down every proposition. They were resolved not to be outnumbered in the benches of the house or to relax their control of the public purse. Brown was fertile in devices to embarrass the government, in order to force it to grant a larger representation to Ontario, but time and again, was defeated on division. Though beaten in the house, his cause was growing stronger outside, and public opinion ripening in his favor. At last matters reached the point that the government could not pass a single measure. An appeal to the electors, as by-elections showed, would not help them, while the Opposition frankly admitted that, without the adoption of representation by population, an appeal to the country would not give them a working majority. There was not a shadow of doubt as to the cause of the crisis—it was the Catholic members obeying the command of their priests to hold on to the grip they had, step by step, got on the government of Canada. The issue was, a compact body of ecclesiastics insisting on retaining the power to control the destinies of the country in the way that suited their interests. Which was going to win—the priests or the people?

Brown never got beyond the conception of the church of Rome that is still entertained by the bulk of Canadians. To him it was a religious body, different from other ecclesiastical organizations only in the extent of the pretensions

and demands of its clergy. That he had, in reality, to deal with a gigantic political society, composed of men oath-bound to make its supremacy the business of their lives, a society whose methods had been elaborated during its growth of centuries, he never recognized. It was to him a church only, and he fought the claims of its supporters as he would have resisted like claims set up by clerics of a Protestant church. That he was contending merely with the by-products of an organization whose purpose is to uproot secular power, in order to give place to its autocratic authority, he did not comprehend. Only those who see in the Papacy a monumental organization which works steadfastly towards the goal of bringing all governments and nations to recognize it has sovereign authority over them—the dictator of what they must do and the regulator of their conduct—can intelligently grapple with this autocratic enemy of the rights of man. Those who enlist in opposing it, who would withstand its pretensions, must set aside and totally ignore the theological, the ecclesiastical features of the Papacy, taking the true view that it is a cunningly-devised organization seeking worldly advantages under the mask of religion. That is nothing new; in all ages there have been associations of men who have acted thus, making pretensions to be the seat of divine authority that they might rule their fellows. Strip the cleric of his robes, and you discover a unit of a vast society seeking to dominate mankind. Brown had no adequate comprehension of the nature of the Power he resisted. If he had, he would never have granted concessions or accepted those compromises which have proved fatal to his reputation and to the peace of Canada.

Brown had cause to deplore he had not, in this crisis, the support he had a right to look for. The Ontario members were not united; party allegiance was stronger with many than the call of principle. The Orange order could have decided the issue by throwing their weight in the balance, but they were divided. This can only be explained by so large a proportion of them being misled by names. In Ulster, where they had come from, Whigs, Reformers, and Liberals were identified with the supporters of Papal claims while the name Conservative was the stamp of all that was staunch for Protestantism. On coming to Canada they were slow to recognize that the names Reformer and Conservative had a different meaning. Honest fellows, who in

their hearts were zealous for the principles of the Revolution of 1688, voted for Cartier and Macdonald because they called themselves Conservatives and opposed Brown for his exulting in the name Reformer. There were exceptions. There were Orangemen who perceived Brown was fighting for the cause they loved, but the rank-and-file followed the advice of leaders, like Gowan, who made the Order a ladder to office and emolument. During the agitation Brown received the only compliment paid him by Orangemen publicly—to their dinner on the Twelfth he was the invited guest of a prominent Toronto lodge. At the Toronto election in which Crawford defeated him, the Orangemen could have changed the day. An incident of it may be recalled. Crawford's success depended on his getting the Catholic vote. The night before the polls were to be opened, the city was covered with placards, which tendered the advice 'Vote for Brown, the Protestant champion.' The Catholics took the injunction in the sense given at the Pickwick election, Don't put him under the pump, and voted down the Protestant champion.

At the critical period, when it hung in the balance whether Ontario was to be ruled by the priests or by the people Brown had a majority of the electors of Ontario behind him, but, by no means an overwhelming majority. Had they lined up as they ought to have done, the constitution that came to be devised would have been so framed that Quebec would not be the thorn it is today in the side of the Dominion, and there would be no call for a change in the constitution to avert civil strife.

Taking part in the discussion as to who was entitled to the name the Father of Confederation, Goldwin Smith remarked it was Mr. Deadlock. The government was at a standstill, neither side of the house able to restart the machine. Macdonald made an overture to form a coalition government, Brown and two of his followers to hold portfolios. His most disinterested friends advised Brown to decline. They pointed out that it was through his efforts Cartier and Macdonald had been brought to their knees to beg his help, and that it was for him and not them, to dictate what should be done. They implored him to take a definite stand by insisting on the Quebec party accepting representation by population as the condition upon which he would work with them. If they would not agree to that,

then on Quebec would rest the accountability of what might ensue. If Quebec would not relinquish the strangle-hold she had obtained over Ontario, by her undue number of representatives in the legislature, then the question of who was to rule, the members who represented the priests or the members who stood for the people, might as well be fought out then as later. Brown hesitated. He refused to take office himself but was willing two of his followers should. This concession gave an opening for negotiations and Brown was speedily so entangled by Macdonald that he could not retreat, and, sorely against his will, he had to become a member of the cabinet. As the French members would not agree to representation by population a compromise was proposed, that the existing legislative union be dissolved and a federal union substituted with representation based on Quebec's population. Intent on Ontario securing the power of governing herself, Brown saw how, under a federal union, that power would be obtained, he, however, did not foresee how, in the drafting of the conditions of a federal union, Quebec might obtain more privileges and greater power than she already possessed. Yet he had fair warning of what was in the minds of those he was dealing with, for they declared that, in whatever changes were made, ample assurance must be given that Quebec's peculiar institutions be preserved. With the prospect of Ontario getting her due, Brown's enthusiasm led him to brush aside all suggestions of danger. He laughed at the fears of the doubters and told Alex. Mackenzie and Holton they might rest assured he would see to it, that, in the new constitution, sectional difficulties would be forever ended. He became possessed with an infatuated belief that the federal system of government would remedy all political ills, that the federal house would rectify any defects in the constitution and could be trusted to do so. He had not sat many days in the conference that was drafting that constitution until his blind self-confidence in what it would accomplish was shaken, for he saw the unsleeping vigilance of Taché and Cartier that it should contain naught that would even indirectly trench on clerical claims—that they nightly submitted what had been done to their priestly advisers and received their instructions as to their next day's work. Articles were adopted which Brown later admitted he had struggled against for days but had let them pass rather

than endanger the opportunity of Ontario's getting control of her own affairs. Among those articles was that on education. It was on the issue of separate schools the difficulty with Quebec had started; it was the exciting cause of the struggle between the two parties that had resulted in the deadlock. How was it settled? By leaving it as it was. Brown frankly acknowledged it was a blot on the constitution, which he had striven to prevent. It was worse than a blot, it was the continuance of the virus that had poisoned the system of government from the hour a legislature had been organized, and was now carefully conserved in the new constitution to inflame and ensure its failure. No agency that falls under government control is comparable to the management of elementary schools. What they are the country will be. If in them sentiments of loyalty to the Empire are taught and of brotherhood among the scholars, Canada's future is assured as a united people, but if the scholars are divided according to creed and a double allegiance taught, only discord can result. Yet this potent agency for making Canadians an harmonious and loyal people was given over by the B. N. A. act to the priesthood. When the test of war came, and it was perceived how large a section held they owed no duty to Britain and would not defend her flag, there were those who wondered it should be so; who could not perceive that they were reaping the certain result of placing the education of the rising generation in the hands of a priesthood instead of under the control of the State. Had Brown stood out and staked his assent to the scheme of Confederation on the insertion in the constitution of a declaration that no contribution either in land or money be made for sectarian purposes, his name would have ranked with those heroes of the past who have secured the inestimable boon of civil liberty. He did not do that, he failed in the day of trial, and will be forever classed with men who knew the right and did not do it. The excuse he offered was, he got a promise the system of sectarian schools would not be further extended in Ontario—a promise that was not kept. The new constitution started with the sectarian principle embalmed within it, ready for development as the priests required. Brown asserted that by its enactment all subjects of discord were swept away and all sectional differences ended forever. He was a poor prophet. At the close of fifty years' experience of that con-

stitution. Ontario faces a vast extension of separate schools, faces a demand for schools whose curriculum shall be dictated by the priests and not by the legislature, faces a demand that the French language be placed on an equality with English, faces an invasion of her territory by columns of habitants organized and sent by the priests with the design that they will dominate constituencies and ultimately obtain the balance of power in the Ontario legislature. As a cure for sectarian evils Confederation has been a disastrous failure.

Equality in rights is the foundation of citizenship; where there is not equality no permanent peace exists. Where there is a favored class, enjoying privileges denied to their fellows, there is a sense of injustice which eventually ends in trouble. That community is alone secure where the civil rights of each inhabitant are identical. The government which singles out a class and gives them privileges which it refuses to all others is provoking unrest, possibly agitation that may end in war. The path of peace lies in each citizen being equal in the eye of the law. From the point of view of the careless-minded, it may seem a trifling matter that the demand of the priests for separate schools for their people should be granted, but it means that Catholics are placed on a different plane from their fellow-citizens, and what is worse, means that the government takes upon itself the prerogative of judging between religions. In considering whether the government is justified in so acting, there is no need of resorting to theology, for the question is not one of doctrine but of civil rights. Is the government justified in conferring on a section of the people privileges different from those it denies to the other sections? If it is not justified, then separate school laws are wrong, because they are a violation of that equality of civil rights which is the basis of free government. A despotic government picks and chooses among the people it rules, giving privileges to one which it denies to another, but a government such as ours which in theory is democratic, and supposed to make no difference between man and man, cannot do so without danger to the peace. The existence of separate schools, maintained by rates which the government gives authority to collect, and by grants from the public treasury, is so gross a violation of the compact on which Canada's government rests, that the

injustice of them will rankle in the minds of the people at large until they are abolished. In George Brown's day that could easily have been done. It is more difficult now because, like all abuses, it has grown and one privilege has been made an excuse for claiming another. In his speech on Confederation he declared there were so few separate schools in Ontario, less than a hundred, that they could not be looked upon as a practical injury. Fifty years has seen that hundred grown to 540, and in addition there is now claimed for them exclusive control by the priests and that their language, where desired, be French.

No sooner had the conference decided on a federal union of Ontario and Quebec, than a larger proposal came, that it should include the maritime provinces and the Northwest. With his colleagues Brown visited the lower provinces, where they found much opposition, and afterwards went to England to arrange for the necessary legislation by the Imperial parliament. No sooner was the new constitution on the fair way to be enacted than he desired to retire from a position which was most uncongenial. He had stayed until the scheme of union was perfected and only the formalities for bringing it into force remained. On the evening of the 19th December, 1865, my brother, Thomas Sellar, who was then Montreal correspondent of the *Globe*, was astonished by George Brown entering his room, and more astonished on his telling him he had left the government. The object of his visit was to get my brother copy the announcement he handed him and telegraph it to the *Globe*. Asked why he had taken so unexpected a step, his reply was he could not stand the conduct of certain of his colleagues, Cartier and Langevin in particular, any longer. Jobs and offices were given to favorites and the whole aim was to use patronage to keep in office and reward supporters. On Macdonald being appealed to he would smile and let them go on. Brown was content the public should think he resigned because Galt, instead of himself, had been chosen to go to Washington for renewal of the reciprocity treaty.

The inauguration of Confederation necessitated a general election. His late colleagues, who would take no denial from him in declining a seat in the cabinet, now conspired to drive Brown from parliament. Having no more use for him they wished him knifed. He stood for South Ontario, confident of election. He was defeated by 69

votes. It was well for himself that he was defeated. It had been one of his sanguine expectations that, when Confederation was enacted, the two parties would revert to their old positions, and that he would again be leader on the left side of the house. He did not make sufficient allowance for the influence of self-interest. Men whom he had fetched out of obscurity and got seats for them, preferred to remain on the side on which the sun of government favors shone. By being shut out of the parliament he had helped to create he was spared the sight of these ingrates. In time a change came, and the Liberals were again in office. Mackenzie pressed the appointment of a senatorship on Mr. Brown which he accepted and later offered to make him lieutenant-governor of Ontario, which he declined. Those who know Brown only from seeing him in the senate saw him in his decline; they did not see the tribune who had shaken Ontario to its centre.

In all the changes he had undergone to one purpose of his earlier years he remained true. He never lost sight of the necessity of opening the vast country that lies west of Ontario. At a period when no interest was taken in the Northwest, as early as 1850, the *Globe* persistently kept before its readers the advantages of colonizing it. By correspondence, maps and editorials the resources and advantages of the prairie country were dwelt upon, until men talked of the Saskatchewan and the Assiniboine, and public opinion was ripened for bursting the barrier with which the Hudson Bay company was keeping it as its preserve. When Confederation came to be considered it was Brown who insisted on the insertion of a clause providing for the admission of the Northwest. No other agitation is comparable to that maintained by him for a score of years to rescue that territory from the grasp of a monopolist and supplanting the buffalo hunter by the farmer. He blazed the trail which his successors in the good work widened into a highway.

His visits to England had brought him in contact with its leading men who estimated his worth without the prejudice of party that caused so many Canadians to underrate his standing. He was twice tendered the honor of knighthood, and twice declined. Perhaps he had a foresight of the poor specimens of humanity who, in the future, were to have titles bestowed upon them.

There are two biographies of Brown, that by Mackenzie, the most poorly written, and that by Lewis, the best written Canada has among its memoirs. Neither biography places the emphasis called for of the effect of a serious illness that befell him in 1861. For several months he hovered on the verge of Death, and when he again appeared in his old haunts it was apparent a change had been wrought in mind as well as body. The masculine force, the imperative spirit, had been tamed. He was still George Brown but not the hearty buoyant Brown of old. A visit to Britain to restore his health contributed to give his nature a new complexion. Mixing for several months in the exclusive society of Edinburgh, he caught its tone and, in a measure, adopted its manners, a change deepened later on by association with the leading politicians of London. He married while in Edinburgh and Toronto hailed his return with his wife by a torchlight procession.

It is pleasant to know that his latter years were happily spent. His family life was delightful, and he indulged in his favorite recreation, that of a gentleman-farmer, to the full. A lifelong temperance man, an advocate of prohibition when the word excited derision, he fell a victim to the liquor traffic. A discharged employee, on the verge of delirium tremens, shot him. He survived six weeks, dying on 9th May, 1889, in his 63rd year.

From the foregoing narrative it will be seen that the birth of Confederation was due to Quebec's insisting on dictating to Ontario what legislation the parliament of that day should enact. Ontario desired to abolish its separate schools, Quebec refused; Ontario objected to grants of public money and charters being given to sectarian institutions, Quebec insisted upon both. The incompatibility of view regarding the management of the Canada of 1867 could not be reconciled, and after a cat-and-dog life of 25 years; the only solution was for the two provinces to separate. The Imperial authorities did not desire the revival of Quebec as a unit, and a compromise was found in dissolving the union of the two provinces made in 1841, and substituting for it a federal union. The source of the trouble was not racial but religious. The priests had certain privileges and immunities that were of great value to them both materially and in giving them paramount influence in the province of Quebec, and these they would not allow to become en-

dangered. To that end they directed how the members of their creed should act and vote. It was this priestly dictation that led to Ontario rising in indignant protest and demanding to be given more members so that she could protect herself. Quebec resisted, the deadlock ensued, and Confederation was adopted as a compromise. In 1867 the belief was general that the new constitution solved all the troubles that were perplexing the country and that Canada had got at last a form of government that would be permanent. So it would, had those who framed Confederation not winked at Quebec's embalming in it an element antagonistic to federal union. The principle of federal union is, that several communities join in forming a strong central government to regulate matters common to them all, and that each of the communities be left to attend to its local affairs. To the successful working of the system it is essential that no one of the communities thus brought into partnership cherishes an institution antagonistic to the civil rights of the others associated with it. When the framers of the U.S. constitution based it on the federal system they were satisfied they had solved the negro difficulty; the States in favor of slavery could have it, and those who disliked it were kept by themselves. Experience proved that, however sound in theory, in practice federal union was impossible where part of the country possessed an institution not compatible with equality of civil rights. The framers of Confederation had this object lesson before them but they ignored it. They knew that in Quebec the system of Church and State was more highly developed than in any other country in the world, and that it was the source of the difficulties which made a new constitution necessary, but, notwithstanding, they left that system untouched, thinking by isolating it in Quebec the other provinces would not be affected. It was the delusion that misled the men who framed the U.S constitution—slavery is a domestic institution and by settling what States shall be left with it and what States shall be free from it, we can ensure the peace of the Republic for all time. The result of their compromise was the bloodiest civil war the world has known. The framers of the B.N.A. act were just as careful to preserve the system of Church and State in Quebec as the American framers were to preserve negro slavery to the Southern States. Widely apart as they are in

aspect, negro slavery and a State Church have this in common, that they are antagonistic to equal citizenship. For over eighty years congress had a number of members who made the maintenance and spread of negro slavery their first aim. During the past fifty years Quebec has sent to the parliament of Canada members whose prime purpose has been to preserve the Papal system as developed in their province. Every proposal that comes before the Ottawa house they defer judging whether it will benefit the Dominion as a whole until they look how it will affect the institution peculiar to Quebec. The practical result is, there are over sixty members who sit in a nominally British house of commons to defend in Quebec and to extend to the other provinces the rule of their priesthood.

To prove how the framers of the B.N.A. act wrought harm to the Dominion by leaving Quebec untouched, one concrete instance is worth pages of general affirmation. Its priests have had education entirely in their hands—from the children in the rural elementary school to the graduates of Laval. The books used, the systems of teaching, the qualifications of the teachers, are under their sole control and direction, all the government does is to supply the money needed. For over seventy years the priests have had the educating of their people, unrestricted, encouraged, and supported by the government. Has the result been for the benefit of the Dominion? Have the youth of Quebec been taught to be loyal and obedient to the Empire? Has the result of their training in school and college been to teach them absolute obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff and to the clergymen who represent him, or has it not? There is talk of a divided allegiance—owning the sway of a spiritual sovereign and that of the temporal king—and that the two forms of fealty are compatible with loyalty to both. See how this pretended dual allegiance is working out. George V. called for soldiers to defend the realm and the Ottawa government took the necessary steps to supply them. The representatives of the Pope say: This is not Quebec's quarrel; France deserves to be punished for her treatment of the Catholic church; stay at home and let the Protestants go. The assertion is made that the priests of Quebec did not give such advice to their people. We who live in Quebec had sad evidence in seeing the flower of our English-speaking youth obeying the King's command, and

the young men controlled by the priests staying on their farms. Bourassa, Lavergne, Marsil are simply megaphones giving sound to the counsel whispered in a thousand parishes. A great trial has overtaken the Empire, the burden of it in Canada has fallen on eight provinces and Quebec has been content they should bear it.

The war has brought home to every thoughtful man in the Dominion the fatal danger of a divided allegiance. Will we profit by it by taking action to remove the source of danger and prevent the like recurring? How can that be done? The dangerous situation that at this moment confronts Canada is due to having left education in the hands of the priests. The remedy is to take the education of the rising generation from the priesthood and, placing it under federal authority, make sure that all our people are trained to be loyal Canadians by obeying the State and not a church. Unity of action necessarily requires one head to a country, the very meaning of the word allegiance signifies that. If the people of the several provinces do not agree to obey the executive and respond to his command, there can be no unity of purpose or action. No man can obey two masters and no country can enjoy the peace that is necessary to stability whose people are not of one mind as to where the sovereign power resides.

In democratically organized countries the head is the State, which is a convenient term to signify the executive of the people, and the State that permits any particular set or section of its citizens to usurp the powers that properly pertain to the executive, endangers that country's existence. Has it not been proved by experience, that education cannot be entrusted to a class with safety to the body of the people? If so, is that all? What about marriage? Is it right, that a compact body of ecclesiastics be allowed to define what marriage is and to enforce on the Dominion their conception of it by decrees and penalties? Is it not an injury to the people, that control of all those institutions which are necessary and are for the people at large, such as lunatic asylums, reformatories and so on, should be given to one peculiar set of ecclesiastics? The fact is, we are trying in Canada to get along under two governments, the one at Ottawa and the other a self-constituted authority which claims it has an inherent right to regulate it, and whose headquarters is in Quebec. This cannot go on forever. In-

fringements on the jurisdiction of the State must be put an end to and the right of the people to supreme and exclusive rule be vindicated.

There are two sets of people among us, who oppose the action necessary to restore to the Ottawa government its full powers. The first are those who allege that the differences which exist are due to misunderstandings. Let us get together, they say, and without prejudice strive to reach a settlement. With the aid of banquets, excursions, and mutual self-admiration assemblies, they have tried to discover the happy medium which would reconcile opposing elements, and have failed ridiculously. These bon entente people do not recognize that it is not antagonistic feelings but conflicting principles that divide Québec from the rest of the other provinces. When the Jesuit estates bill was before the Dominion parliament Sir John Macdonald ridiculed the prayer of the petitioners by declaring they had no practical grievance, for the bill involved only giving a morsel of land and a trifling sum of money—small affairs to a parliament that had voted tens of millions of acres and money to railways. To illustrate this he told the story of a Jew who gratified his craving for a pork chop. While enjoying the savory bite there was a thunder-clap, when the Jew exclaimed his astonishment that God should make such a fuss over a bite of pork. The members roared with laughter and obeyed the Old Chief by throwing out the bill, only 13 voting for it. The petitioners against the Jesuit bill did not object to the amount of money or extent of land but to the principle involved in the grant—that it was given by the Quebec legislature in obedience to an order of the Pope, as an act of restitution for what had been done by Britain at the conquest of Canada. Several of the instances the bon entente people single out as trivial may be so in money value, but are of vital importance from the principle underlying them, namely that exclusive privileges may be allowed by parliament on the score of creed. Their goody-goody talk is on a par with Sir John Macdonald's pork story. The second set of people who refuse to lend a hand in the reforms called for, misapprehend the motive of action. They are for toleration and are not bigots or Orangemen. They mistake the entire situation. The Quebec priests and their supporters set up pretensions to certain exclusive privileges and favors, and for these they have

no other title to offer than that of their creed. Are not those who demand special favors on the score of their creed the people who introduce religious discord into our political life and not those who decline to consider such a plea? What the reformers want, is to do away with all sectarian demands and favors, and confine the government to its purely secular functions. Are the men who agitate for clearing our political atmosphere of religious cries, to be stigmatized as bigots? All religious bodies are entitled to be protected by the State in the exercise of their work, but with that protection the duty of the State ends; it goes beyond its jurisdiction when it favors one denomination above another. The true friends of peace, are those who desire that all religious bodies be placed on an equality. In trying to bring that about, what semblance is there to intolerance?

The situation as regards creed is this, the priests of Quebec have obtained powers detrimental to the interests of the rest of the Dominion. To insure the peace of the commonwealth it is requisite those powers be taken away, and that they be placed on the same footing as clergymen of other denominations. This is the end aimed at and to reach it these are the main reforms to be sought—

A uniform system of public schools for the Dominion;

One marriage law for the Dominion;

Withdrawal of grants of public money from sectarian institutions;

To all religious denominations, limiting the extent of real estate they shall hold to actual needs;

That there be no discrimination in levying taxes in favor of religious bodies;

The repeal of all laws giving authority to ecclesiastical corporations to levy and collect dues.

Once it is decided by the electors of the Dominion that there shall be complete and final severance between its government and all ecclesiastical organizations, what a relief there will be from strife and clerical importunities! Were the State to put its house so in order that neither priest nor minister could, by any possibility, obtain a single special favor, would they have the motive they have now for interfering with the working of our government and endeavoring to control it? They would cease to ask when they knew they could not get. In complete separation of our govern-

ment from all sectarian connection, depends the future welfare of our country, and until that is effected it will not be free from distraction or cease to have one hand tied behind its back when desirous of doing its duty by the Empire of which it is a part.

Those who engage in the agitation to bring this about do so under the serious disadvantage of having their motive misrepresented and have the epithets Bigots, Fanatics, Persecutors hurled at them. Such names come strangely from a party who have no other foundation for their claims to rule than a dogmatic assumption that they and they alone are right and that all who do not acknowledge that claim are outside the pale of salvation. You say you are in favor of a system of public schools; with the blackest looks they can command, you are denounced as seeking to destroy religion. You say you wish to have equal rights for every man, you are abused as a bigot. You say the government should recognize no sectarian divisions in our population, you are accused of persecution. Every move made to bring about the abolition of special privileges is met, not with argument, but with abusive epithets. This hinders many from taking a stand against a system they are convinced is dangerous to the peace and security of the nation, for they shrink from being classed either as bigots or persecutors. Are we to be prevented from doing our duty because our opponent hoists false colors and uses false names? We scorn the impostor who uses religious cant to swindle us out of cash or property. What of a body of men set on establishing autocrat rule under the veil of Godliness? Are we to be kept from maintaining our unquestioned rights as Britons because those who infringe upon them have assumed the airs of sanctity and pervert the meaning of the epithets bigot and fanatic?

He who is zealous for promoting the cause of civil rights is the man unbiassed by creed. He meddles not with the doctrines or ceremonies of any church. All forms, modes, and shows of piety he respects as private concerns of the individual and to be left alone by the State so long as those who profess them do not infringe upon the rights of others. It is not intolerance to contend that our government should be colorless as to creed; it is not fanaticism to insist that public money should not be spent on sectarian institutions; it is not bigotry to demand that all

citizens stand, as regards privileges, on the same level regardless of the church they go to. Is it not senseless for intelligent men to keep on mistaking sacerdotalism for religion, or, drawing a distinction between the crowned tyrant who justifies his despotic rule by claiming divine right, and the man who assumes autocrat power by asserting he represents Christ? To the man in whose breast thrills the passion for Freedom as exemplified in Democracy, the dictator in the black robe is no less the enemy of Liberty than he who wears the Imperial purple. In France and Italy they have got beyond mistaking Truth Divine for man-devised pretensions, and draw a sharp distinction between clericalism and religion. They do not count themselves as lacking in respect to the Father of All when they enact laws to stop the interfering by priests in the domain of government. Until we reach the same understanding in Canada the great reforms in its constitution cannot be effected, the agitation will be blocked and misrepresented by charges of bigotry, intolerance, and persecution. The war we wage is not for or against any church, but for the vindication of those equal civil rights that are the inalienable heritage of every British subject. We have been given a country of vast possibilities. How vast few comprehend. Is it not a degrading thought, that its future should be menaced by a priesthood? Is there not patriotism enough among us to rise above local issues and devote our political efforts to bringing about complete separation of Church and State—that Canada shall be ruled by and in the interests of her people, and not by and for the advantage of any church?

ROBERT SELLAR

Huntingdon, Que., July, 1917

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